

From: steve kolb
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I have been a Macintosh professional since 1984. In those years, supporting large numbers of individual and state government users, I have observed an erosion of market share by Mac users and wholesale shift away from the Macintosh Operating System in favor of the "market leader," Microsoft Windows. In 1995, Information Technology decision makers at the California Department of Corrections established a no compromise policy to dump all Apple-based computers and replace them with Windows OS computers, even though a number of organizations within that large organizations were perfectly happy and productive using Macs.

The same thing happened again at the California Department of Transportation, where engineers, graphic artists, trainers, labor relations staff and other assorted professionals were told to spend tens of thousands of dollars to purchase new Windows2000 Pro-based PCs and get rid of their Macs because the Department's IT division wanted a single standard for servers, workstations, and portables. The computers that were replaced included first and second generation Power Macintosh G4 computers with enough power and capability to run circles around the brand new HP Vectra computers that were bought as replacements.

The argument from IT has continued to be in favor of a single Operating System that they can control and, in theory, service. However, the PCs running various versions of Windows (NT, 3.5, 2000) require far more support and are less reliable than the Macs they replaced.

All of this comes as a result of the band-wagon mentality of managers who have been convinced that the one with the most marbles wins and everyone else has to quit the game. Quitting the game for the Mac OS has been very difficult and stressful for users and professionals who support them. And the costs in terms of productivity and worker satisfaction have been great. The pressure from Microsoft on large institutional installations to maintain only one way of doing things has yielded additional fallout. People who are forced to use Windows-based computers at work, seem to find it less compelling to keep their Macs at home and when it comes time to buy a new computer at home, too often yield and buy a low-cost PC with Windows preinstalled to maintain the illusion of compatibility between work and home.

Any settlement that does not hit Microsoft in the pocketbook very hard and in their business model that has had such a widespread and insidious anti-competitive effect is certainly not in the public interest. If monopolistic practices is what they have been convicted of, then any settlement must include remedies that not only disintegrate their defacto monopoly, but also inhibit its continued growth and future effect in the personal computer and workstation market.

Respectfully Submitted
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